South and East-West corridors the land acquisition has been lagging behind in all the States;

(b) whether only about 14.90 per cent of the land requirement has so far been acquired by the NHAI with Andhra Pradesh recording the lowest acquisition share of 0.2 per cent; and

(c) whether the corridors projects are scheduled to be completed and commissioned by early 2008 and if so, whether Government would catch up with the deadline?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) Upto 31st March 2006 an expenditure of Rs. 4270.62 crore has been incurred on North South & East West Corridors and more than 50% of land has been acquired. The acquisition of land is not lagging behind in most of the States.

(b) No, Sir. More than 50% of land acquisition for North-South and East-West Corridor is completed. In Andhra Pradesh, more than 65% of land has been acquired.

(c) It is the endeavour of the Government to complete the Corridors substantially by December, 2008.

Separate MMD for fishing vessels

2813. PROF. P.J. KURIAN: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have formed a task force to study the need to set up a separate Marine Mercantile Department (MMD) exclusively for the fishing vessels;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the present structure MMD has shown delays and lack of enthusiasm for the fishing sector; and

(d) the steps proposed to set up a separate MMD for the non-shipping sector?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No incident of delay and lack of enthusiasm by Mercantile Marine Departments towards the fishing sector has come to the notice of the Government.

(d) There is no proposal to set up a separate MMD for the non-shipping sector.

Strengthening and widening of State/National Highways

2814. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a number of proposals of the State Governments requesting for the Central assistance for strengthening and widening of National Highways/State Highways are pending for clearance;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons therefor; and

(d) steps taken/proposed to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The details of pending proposals of State Governments is enclosed as Statement. *(See below)*

(c) The reasons for pendency are:

(i) Allowable Bank of sanctions during Financial Year 2005-06 got exhausted.

(ii) Due to the model code of conduct enforced because of elections in Kerala State, issue of sanctions kept pending.

(iii) Change in scope of one of the Centrally sponsored works in respect of Mizoram State. Hence 'in principle' approval to be given again.

(iv) Under utilization of funds by some of the State Governments thus delaying the sanction of new works of State roads under Central Road Fund (CRF).

(d) The steps taken/proposed to be taken to clear the pending proposals:

(i) As regards the CRF works, the State Governments are being requested to take up the works early and to expedite the progress on the work so that there is more utilisation of funds and more CRF proposals can be approved by the Ministry.